

# Wrestling an Exercise that Will Make Nation of Supermen

BY J. B. SHERIDAN

THE untimely death ten days before Christmas of Frank Gotch brings to mind that of all the athletic exercises practiced by men, wrestling is best calculated to develop great bodily power, perfect health and, with Gotch as the exception that proves the rule, longevity.

This is easily explained. Wrestling is massage for the veins, arteries, stomach and intestines. It develops the muscles to a greater degree than any other exercise. When you wrestle you have a live human body, human contact, for your exercising machine. The live human body is a better instrument of exercise than the bars, the weights, the dumb-bells, the clubs, the oar, the rowing machine, than any mechanical device. All this is easily understood.

While wrestling is probably the oldest sort of physical competition, and while it was in a highly developed state at the dawn of history, it was not until the present era that its possibilities have been fully exploited.

The first wrestling that we have any record of was that practiced by the Greeks and Romans in the fifth century before Christ. Hence it is known to this day as Graeco-Roman, and is that form of wrestling most generally practiced all over the world. In Europe Graeco-Roman is practically the only form of sport known, or at least generally practiced. Graeco-Roman wrestling restricts the competitors to holds above the waist. Men with enormous necks and deep chests and thick shoulders and huge upper bodies excel at Graeco-Roman wrestling for the reason that opponents find it difficult to secure compelling holds on them. The shoulders and neck holds, the nelsons and the hammerlocks and arm holds are about the only effective grips that can be had under Graeco-Roman rules.

## The English Wrestlers,

It is not easy to obtain good leverage on men with enormous necks, deep chests and large upper bodies. Therefore, possession of these things gives a Graeco-Roman wrestler advantages which skill cannot overcome. Hence many of the famous Graeco-Roman wrestlers are merely gifted by nature with enormous necks, chests and shoulders. This results in the development of a heavy, fat champion, of which the various "terrible Turks"; Zbyszko, the Pole; Hackenschmidt, the Russo-German, and other European champions have been striking examples.

Catch-as-catch-can is superior to all other forms of wrestling, in that the contestants are allowed to take advantage of the entire body to achieve their objects. Certain holds and grips are, of course, barred as foul, but the wrestlers can take advantage of any part of the body, from scalp to toes, to secure a leverage. Then both shoulders must touch the mat, and, in some instances, according to agreement, be pinned there to secure a fall.

Throwing open the entire body to attack after the American fashion gives skill a much greater chance than restricting holds to half the body as in Graeco-Roman, or even to one particular grip, as in Cumberland style, in which the contestants lock arms about each others' waists and are not supposed to employ any other hold, but just tug and trip until one or the other is overthrown. An instance of the advantages which the American style of catch-as-catch-can gives the skillful wrestler is shown by the toe hold, the grip with which Frank Gotch overcame the supposed-to-be invincible Hackenschmidt.

## Known as "The Russian Lion,"

Hackenschmidt, a man of enormous neck, shoulders and chest, was almost invincible at Graeco-Roman style. His neck was so large, and so strong, his chest so deep, his depth of shoulder so vast and his activity so remarkable that it was sheerly impossible for any man, save, perhaps, an extremely long-armed person, to get an effective grip on him under Graeco-Roman rules. To secure an effective neck hold, the only one which is really effective under Graeco-Roman style, you must pass your arm under your opponent's armpit and take a firm hold on his neck. Hackenschmidt like other champions of the Graeco-Roman style, was so deep through the chest, neck and shoulders that the average man could not reach under his armpit and then secure a firm hold on his neck for the reason that no normal arm was long enough to traverse the distance and obtain firm leverage on the neck of the huge Russo-German.

Gotch, a man of remarkable internal power and great skill, had short arms. Clearly he had little chance to obtain a workable neck hold on Hackenschmidt. It was up to Gotch to devise some other method of throwing the Teuto-Slav, who had terrorized two continents. Gotch resorted to the toe hold.

The toe hold is one of the simplest, yet most ingenious methods of physical torture ever invented by the fiendish ingenuity of man. It consists simply in catching hold of an opponent's great toe, twisting it back until the foot gives way and bends at the ankle and, then, twisting the ankle back until the offensive affects the leg. The leg bends at the knee and then it is comparatively easy to turn an opponent half way on his back. Once he is there the rest is certain and easy for the man on offense, slow and terrible for the man on defense. When the prostrate man half turns on his back, as he need must, the man on the offensive merely puts his chest against the foot of the foe and, with a smile on his face, just pushes the foot toward the body of its owner.

The sensation is that of having your leg torn out at the hip socket. And that is exactly what will happen if you do not surrender. Many men have valiantly borne the excruciating pain inseparable from this operation, but not any one of them has ever been known to let the attack run its logical course, that is, to the dislocation of the leg at the hip point. The pain is so intense and so terrible that no human being can endure it and retain consciousness.

This is the simplest, yet the most terrible grip known to wrestling, though the "face lock," improved from the "strangle hold" is nothing more nor less than a grip which, unless you surrender, will result in dislocating both jaw bones from their sockets. Beall, the developer of this inhuman grip, was a small man with extremely thick and powerful arms. His trick was to get the point of his opponent's jaw in the hollow of his elbow joint. When he had accomplished this, his upper and lower arms closed on the jaw like a vise. Beall would then grasp the wrist of the engaged hand with the free hand and tighten the vise at his pleasure. The logical result of this awful grip was the possible mashing and certain dislocation of your entire jawbone.

No man, fortunately, was ever able to endure the frightful pain to the logical limit. One or two men, I believe, did suffer a simple fracture of their jaws in this grip, but no one, so far as there is any record of it, ever has had his jawbone pulled out of its sockets by this terrible American wrestler. Yet Beall was a small man and, barring his special grip, would be a mere baby in the hands of the Graeco-Roman giants of European sports.

Armed with his "face lock" he was an opponent dreaded by every wrestler in the world. He once threw the great Gotch, though Gotch has been rated as the greatest catch-as-catch-can wrestler of all time and was a much larger and a much heavier man than Beall.

STANISLAUS ZBYSZKO



## The Strangle Hold.

There are other extremely cruel holds in wrestling. The "strangle," of which the "face lock" is a development, was applied to the throat and, as its name implied, shut off the air of the unfortunate man upon whom it was inflicted. But men of great muscularity of neck have been known to break a strangle hold. No man has ever been known to break a toe hold after he was turned on his side.

Some men of tremendous arm power can develop a "head lock," a vise applied to the skull so that it will cause an opponent most intense pain. This grip, however, lacks the effect of the "face lock," "hammer lock" and "strangle hold," in that it can be more readily slipped. It is impossible to secure an unbreakable grip on the cranium of a strong man.

The hammer lock will, if permitted to go to its logical end, result in dislocation of the shoulder blade and rupture of the ligaments of the shoulder. It is a cruel grip, but quite common and effective. It is, of course, legal under Graeco-Roman as well as under catch-as-catch-can rules.

Skilled catch-as-catch-can wrestlers can throw skilled opponents by clever use of their legs without employing a hand in the effort. In fact, Joe Stecher who recently lost the championship to Earl Caddock of Iowa, was, and is, famous for his terrific "scissors" grip.

The "scissors" is nothing new in wrestling. It is as old as the sport. It is merely the double use of the legs, in the fashion of a scissors, to apply force to the person of the opposing wrestler. This pressure and leverage may be applied to any part of the

body, to the head, the foot, the arm, etc. In the case of Stecher the "scissors" was applied to the body, preferably to the abdomen.

It has been said that the man had such an uncanny grip in his limbs that he can crush the body of a strong man between them. This is probably an exaggeration. The chances are that Stecher has an extremely powerful grip with his legs and can assist it by applying the tremendous leverage which the legs give a wrestler to accomplish his ends. While the use of the "scissors" is old, it is, nevertheless, uncommon, and wrestlers have not been attacked with it often enough to have developed a good defense for it. In the case of Stecher it has been said that he can bestride an opponent who is on his knees on the mat, a very common position, and cause him intense pain merely by pressing him between his knees. However, this may be, Stecher enjoyed rapid ascent in the ranks of wrestlers, chiefly by exercise of his "scissors." He speedily met defeat when he wrestled Earl Caddock, a young man who had not achieved more than a local vogue to the time he won his championship.

There is another villainous trick, it can scarce be called a "hold," in wrestling. It is called the "smother." As its name implies, it smothers an opponent. It has been applied by men of considerable abdominal adiposity to prostrate opponents and consists in merely lying, stomach down, on the face of a prostrate opponent whose second shoulder has not yet touched the mat. The result is shutting off of the air supply and collapse. There can be little doubt that, arm-

GOTCH ILLUSTRATING ARM HOLD AND HALF FACE LOCK



WLADEK ZBYSZKO

A VARIATION OF THE DREADFUL TOE-HOLD. THE FOOT WILL BE BROKEN IF ITS OWNER DOES NOT HOIST THE WHITE FLAG



WLADEK ZBYSZKO

WLADEK ZBYSZKO

ed with guns of twenty-mile range and enormous effective radius of shell, explosions, artillery of all ranges down to 2000 yards, rifles with a killing range of 2600 yards, trench mortars, bombs, bayonets, knives and other implements of long-range destruction, that wrestling has not cut any great figure in fighting in Europe, Asia and Africa. Yet we frequently read of hand-to-hand combats where weapons are thrown away and men literally fight with their bare hands. When we read these things we cannot, but wish that every American soldier and every soldier of America's allies was an expert wrestler.

When it comes to hand-to-hand combat the wrestler has advantages over the unfortunate man who does not know how to wrestle that are insuperable. However, when it comes to hand-to-hand and foot-to-foot combat, there are devices, barred in competition under rules, which are far

more deadly and far more effective than any the most skillful wrestler can hope to apply. There can be slight doubt that the vilest and most awful of all blows—a kick in the groin or in the pit of the stomach—is a favorite device of the infuriated men who meet without weapons in the awful slaughter of the world war. So when we carry the argument to the abused logical conclusion we find that first principles overshadow and overwhelm the best efforts of manual science and skill.

Withal, it is bodily training, as a developer of physical strength and self-reliance, rather than as a final means of offense which is defense that wrestling is most valuable. It surely does make a man stronger than any other form of athletic exercise. And in any kind of struggle, professional, commercial, athletic or physical strength is a tremendous asset to the man who possesses it.

In so much as wrestling peculiarly fits a man to digest and to assimilate his food, to endure hardships, to fight powerfully, it must be regarded as the best of all exercises that go to make a good soldier.

The value of wrestling to the human being the best exemplified in the longevity of its practitioners, with Gotch as a notable exception, and the longevity of their athletic excellence. There is ample proof that when it comes to postponing old age, no athletic exercise at all approaches wrestling. The fact that the champion wrestlers are at the heights of their professional careers at the age of 40 proves this. Gotch was 40 when he achieved the greatest triumph of his career—the defeat of Hackenschmidt.

A Clinch.  
"How does Gladys manage to preserve her complexion so well?"  
"Easily. She keeps it in air-tight jars."—Baltimore American.

The Way to Earn Money Is to Work for It, but That Hardly Comes Under the Classification of High Finance.